tonnes of metal Scrap will be required by mini steel plants.

(c) Total arisings of Metal Scrap in the country during this year are expected to be about 2.00 million tonnes.

(d) The gap in the domestic availability and demand of the item is proposed to be filled by import of Metal Scrap in the form of Scrap/ Sponge Iron/Hot Briquetted Iron.

Reduction of import duty on melting scrap, sponge iron, etc.

2972. SHRI SYED AHMAD HASHMI: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether melting scrap, sponge iron and hot briquetted iron are imported in the country; if so, the quantity of each item imported during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) whether Government propose to reduce import duty on these items to bring it at par with import duty on billets;

(c) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(d) if the answer to part (b) above be in the negative, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI K. C. PANT): (a) The quantity of Carbon Steel Melting Scrap & Sponge Iron imported during the last three years was as under:—

S. No.	*Commodity*	Year		
		1982-83	1983-84	1984-85
1	Carbon Steel Melting	631	720	810
2	Sponge Iron	66	23.7	42.1

Hot Briquetted Iron has not been imported so far.

(b) to (d) Carbon Steel Melting Scrap, Sponge Iron etc. are the raw materials for production of Ingots/ billets. Therefore Customs duty on both these items is not comparable. However the Government have received certain representations for reduction in the import duty on melting scrap etc. used by Electric Are Furnace units, which are under consideration.

Import of billets

2973. SHRI SYED AHMAD HASHMI: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) what is the quantity of billets imported during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) what amount of foreign exchange was spent on these imports; and

(c) what steps Government are taking to stop its import and develop indigenous industry?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI K. C. PANT): (a) and (b) During the last three years, i.e., 1982-83, 1983-84 and 1984-85, Steel Authority of India Limited, the then

Canalising Agency, did not import billets. Data on total import for these years are yet to be published.

(c) Production of steel within the country is being stepped up by increasing capacity utilisation and expending the existing integrated steel plants and by setting up additional steel making capacity. However, in view of the projected growth of demand some imports may continue to be necessary.

Accumulation of disproportionate Assets by the officials of collectorate of Customs (Preventive), Bombay.

2974. SHRI RAMCHANDRA BHARADWAJ: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some top officials of the Collectorate of Customs (Preventive), Bombay have accumulated assets disproportionate to their income;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Assistant Collector of Customs (Preventive), New Customs House, Bombay has recently purchased property and other articles worth Rs. 30 lakhs; and

(c) if so, whether Government propose to make a high level inquiry into the matter and take necessary action and if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) and (b) A general watch is kept by the Government and wherever necessary, appropriate action is taken. No specific case relating to any Assistant Collector of Customs has, however, come to Government's notice.

(c) In view of (a) and (b) above, does not arise.

Cotton Corporation of India

2975. PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA:
SHRI S. W. DHABE:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Cotton Corporation of India is not earning any profits;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what are the details of profit/loss account of the Corporation for 1982-83; 1983-84 and 1984-85?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN): (a) and (b) The Corporation is at present incurring losses. The main reasons for the losses suffered by the Corporation are on account of the heavy interest burden on the past borrowings from the banks/Government which the Corporation had to undertake in order to make large purchases during the years of confortable cotton supply position and on account of the carrying costs of the stocks.

(c) The information is as under:—

Year	Loss (Rs. in crores)
1982-83	25.14
1983-84	14.22
1984-85	12.15 (Provisional)

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Consumer Price Index

2976. PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA:
SHRI S. W. DHABE:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 1617 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 3rd December, 1985 regarding purchasing power of the rupee and state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to change the basis of formulating the consumer price index and to have a new formula so as to neutralise the effects of rise in cost of living for the Government employees and industrial workers;

(b) whether it is a fact that the base year 1960 which is taken to determine